

III. ДИСКУССИИ

<https://doi.org/10.21638/2226-5260-2020-9-1-355-365>

RESPONSE TO ANNA YAMPOLSKAYA'S REVIEW OF *LEVINAS, KANT AND THE PROBLEMATIC OF TEMPORALITY*

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The aim of this paper is to respond to Anna Yampolskaya's challenge to the interpretative strategy of my book, *Levinas, Kant and the Problematic of Temporality*. I intend to refute her claim that by effectively withdrawing the problematic of sensibility from view my book has forgotten, or, at the very least, shaded the Rosenzweigian requirement of concreteness that Levinas first inherited from Heidegger, and to refute her corollary argument that my ethical reading of the schematism in Kant's *First Critique* is not sufficiently justified because it suspends the problem of the symbolic imagination in Kant's *Third Critique*. This double refutation will require me to reiterate the concrete unveiling of the Kantian schematism in Heidegger's interpretation of Kant (according to its destruction of the schematism of the categories) and in Levinas' explication of Rosenzweig (such as it unfolds a more radical destruction of the schematism of the ideas). It will also require me to demonstrate precisely how this ideal notion of the Kantian schematism in the form of the regulative ideas of pure reason (and more specifically, in the form of the regulative idea of God) is indeed read by Levinas himself in the ethical terms of the equivocation or enigma of diachrony, that is, in the ethical terms of his *philosophy of ambiguity* (such as it adheres to the Kantian antinomies). This is the interpretation that I propose to defend against Yampolskaya's claim that my ethical reading of the *First Critique* should have taken this ambiguous form of rationality seriously.

Key words: Levinas, Kant, Heidegger, Rosenzweig, Kantian schematism, imagination, reason, sensibility, diachrony.

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ОТВЕТ НА РЕЦЕНЗИЮ АННЫ ЯМПОЛЬСКОЙ НА КНИГУ «ЛЕВИНАС, КАНТ И ПРОБЛЕМАТИКА ТЕМПОРАЛЬНОСТИ»

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Цель этой статьи — ответить на предпринятую Анной Ямпольской интерпретацию моей книги «Левинас, Кант и проблематика темпоральности». Я попытаюсь опровергнуть её тезис о том, что при вынесении проблематики чувственности (*sensibility*) за скобки, в книге упускается — или, по крайней мере, остаётся в тени — требование Розенцвейга о конкретике, которую Левинас впервые позаимствовал у Хайдеггера. Я попытаюсь опровергнуть сделанный А. Ямпольской вывод о том, что моё этическое прочтение кантовского схематизма в «Критике чистого разума» является недостаточно обоснованным, поскольку оно вновь поднимает проблему символического воображения, изложенную в третьей «Критике». Подобные опровержения ставят меня перед необходимостью обращения к интерпретации кантианского схематизма Хайдеггером (учитывая предпринятую им деструкцию¹ схематизма применительно к категориям) и к анализу Розенцвейга Левинасом: во втором случае деструкция трансцендентального схематизма была ещё более радикальной. Возражения потребуют от меня более точного определения того, каким образом идеальная концепция кантовского схематизма в виде регулятивных идей чистого разума (и особенно в качестве регулятивной идеи Бога) действительно прочитывается Левинасом в терминах этического, а именно эквивокальности (или энигмы) диахронии, что является частью этической терминологии его философии двусмысленности (поскольку здесь он следует за антиномиями Канта). Так, я выдвигаю свое объяснение в ответ на утверждение Анны Ямпольской о том, что мое этическое прочтение «Критики чистого разума» должно более серьезно учитывать это двусмысленную форму рациональности.

Ключевые слова: Левинас, Кант, Хайдеггер, Розенцвейг, трансцендентальный схематизм, воображение, рассудок, чувственность, диахрония.

I would like to begin by expressing a profound debt of gratitude to Anna Yampolskaya for reviewing my book *Levinas, Kant and the Problematic of Temporality* in the journal *Horizon. Studies in Phenomenology*. I am certainly not oblivious to the risk of the immediate self-contradiction of seeming ungrateful if I now choose to respond with various correctives to the critical comments that she herself, in her kindness and generosity, has made. But if such a confrontation between us proves to be somehow instructive, then my response will have gone some way to having repaid the debt owed to her, at least in some small measure, and thus will not have been in vain. Yampol-

¹ А. Ямпольская в своей рецензии даёт как синонимичные к «деструкции» слова *деформализация* и *реконструкция* (Yampolskaya, 2018, 579).

skaya provides a wonderfully unorthodox and eccentric challenge to the interpretive strategy of my book. She claims that: “An attempt to withdraw the problematic of sensibility (and we all know how important this is for Kant and for Levinas) beyond the framework of the book leads to the fact that the Rosenzweigian requirement of *concreteness* [...] is forgotten or, at least, shaded” (Yampolskaya, 2018, 584)². She then goes on to argue, as a direct corollary of this first claim, that “the ‘ethical’ reading of Kant’s doctrine of the schematism, which suspends not only the problem of imagination (and therefore, the related problem of symbolization), but also the question of the power of judgement, is not sufficiently justified. The task that Frangeskou set himself cannot be solved without referring to the *Third Critique*, where the connection between the three basic powers (reason, understanding, and judgment) is clarified” (Yampolskaya, 2018, 584). But is all this truly the case? Do matters really stand this way? It is certainly worth citing a few passages from the final chapter of the book in order to refute these claims:

Prior to his Kant lectures of 1976, Levinas at least twice recognised in the metaphysical enterprise of the *Critique of Pure Reason* the ideal notion of the schematism that was elucidated by the Transcendental Dialectic. [...] According to these two texts [specifically, the 1968 articles “Infinity” and “Totality and Totalization”], what is essential does not have to do with the separation of the ideas from the datum of sensibility [...]. For, in fact, the ideas of pure reason are never said here to be simply separated from the sensible datum, [...] but far more radically connected to the sensible datum according to their regulative function in the constitution of time. In 1781, the dialectical connection of the ideas with the datum of sensibility is thought explicitly by being made analogous to the sensible schemas of the understanding, an *analogue* that is rendered inevitable by the fact that the ideas are exhibited in the understanding’s a priori cognitions of the object of experience just as much as the categories. (Frangeskou, 2017, 155–156)

[T]he schema of reason, *likened* as it is to the sensible schemata of the understanding, is deduced ‘indirectly’ on the basis of the transcendental power of imagination. In short, the dialectical connection of the ideas with the datum of sensibility is exhibited analogically according to a time-forming mode of unity [...] which regulates the pure synthesis of imagination [...] by maximizing it in advance. (Frangeskou, 2017, 157)

The privilege thus accorded by Kant to the schema of reason over the sensible schemata of the understanding allows one first of all to free his notion of a transcendental schema of time [...] from the ontological limits of Heidegger’s interpretation of 1929. But it also allows one to free up an ethical interpretation of the three time-forming modes of pure synthesis. (Frangeskou, 2017, 162)

Indeed, the essential unity of the three horizons of time is exhibited according to the maximizing unity of separation. It should therefore come as no surprise that Kant him-

² All English translations of Yampolskaya’s original text (in Russian) are my own.

self explicitly established that the regulative principles of systematic unity do indeed operate the maximization of this essential threefold unity, and he did so by trying to ‘make the systematic unity among the three logical principles sensible’ in — and thus to schematize it as — three horizontal standpoints from which to present the infinite multitude of things as such. (Frangeskou, 2017, 166)³

Yampolskaya is therefore quite mistaken when she says that the general framework of my book effectively withdraws the problematic of sensibility from view, and that consequently, its ethical reading of Kant’s doctrine of the schematism suspends the problem of imagination. So, what is it that compels Yampolskaya to voice her objections in these terms I wonder? In other words, what forces her to conclude that reference to the *Third Critique* is the only justifiable way to solve the task that I had set for myself? The answer to these questions lies undoubtedly in her reliance on Marc Richir’s interpretation of Levinas as a philosopher “of the sublime grandeur,” and thus, on his claim that Levinas’ idea of the infinite (*apeiron*) in ethics rediscovered and revitalized Kant’s own idea of the sublime in nature (*physis*) (Richir, 1988, 179). Richir’s own essay on Levinas—“Phenomenon and Infinity”—presents a cogent argument for just that philosophical continuity. But, notwithstanding the bond he establishes here, Richir’s conception of “the *phenomenological sublime*” embraces a psychoanalytic understanding of the infinite that Levinas strictly opposed (Richir, 1988, 176). More specifically, Richir wants to establish “the proto-temporalization” of the infinite as “the site” of “the *phenomenological unconscious*,” and he therefore displays a clear divergence from Levinas’ own ethical understanding of it (Richir, 1988, 160)⁴. For it is the proto-temporalization of the infinite as “always already taken up by the ruses of the *symbolic unconscious*” that is the essay’s “realm” of phenomenological concern (Richir, 1988, 181). For it is primarily an essay written from the perspective of “this other possibility of phenomenology,” one inaugurated (claims Richir) by Plato, who in his “reflections on the One in the *Parmenides*” thereby freed the proto-temporalization of the infinite from the kind of “paradoxical and nearly impossible ‘reflection on God’ ” characteristic of Levinas’ philosophy (Richir, 1988, 177–180). The central argument of the essay—which, in the wake of Kant’s teaching on the symbolic func-

³ The citation is taken from Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 658/B 686. Here, references to this text (Kant, 1996) will be cited parenthetically by the pagination of the A and B editions only.

⁴ We should note, however, that despite Levinas’ strict opposition to psychoanalysis, an understanding of proto-temporalization as the phenomenological site of the unconscious is something that he found perfectly congenial to his own ethical philosophy: “I have a very great suspicion with regard to the practice of psychoanalysis and to its abuses. The [...] ethical relation [...] is respect, not repression; [...] But if the concept of the unconscious were to signify a lived mental experience [...], thus giving it all the significations of temporality, then it suits me fine” (Levinas, 2001, 118).

tion of the imagination in the *Third Critique*, traces out for phenomenological investigation “the infinite [...] which has always already *instituted* me in my identity without a concept, beyond the failure of the schematization of the imagination” (Richir, 1988, 178)—validates Richir’s later remark that “the Infinite,” as “the site of a symbolic tautology unique in its kind,” is “the *apeiron* which agitates all limits from within by infinitizing them and which [...] is always already and always still in the ‘process’ of proto-temporalization” (Richir, 1988, 178–179). The proto-temporalization of the infinite thus articulates what Richir at the end of the essay calls “a ‘speculative site’ where [...] the enigma of the humanity of human beings may yet turn back into a phenomenological ‘generosity’ of the radically untamed *apeiron*” (Richir, 1988, 182). And he concludes that “This is a site [...] where the phenomena, themselves infinite, of the untamed *apeiron* of the *physis* are perhaps less distant than one would think from the Levinasian infinite” (Richir, 1988, 182)⁵.

But is the proto-temporalization of the Levinasian infinite reducible only to the symbolic institution (or “symbolization,” to borrow Yampolskaya’s own term here) of the imagination in Kant’s *Third Critique*, and thus, to a function of the imagination which already operates beyond the failure of its own schematization of a concept in Kant’s *First Critique*? My response to this question must be very precise and exacting. In the final section to his 1927–28 lecture course *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, Heidegger states that “In the *Critique* Kant specifies the function of the [...] *pure* power of imagination” as having to “bring the *pure* manifold of time into the form of a *pure* image. Productive synthesis forms into ‘an image’; it offers productively a *figura*. Hence Kant also calls productive synthesis ‘*figurative synthesis*’” (Heidegger, 1977, 414–415). Heidegger ends the section—and indeed, the lecture course as a whole—with a brief interpretation of the schematism chapter: “In the schematism,” he writes, “Kant attempts to grasp the synthesis *a priori* of the productive power of imagination [...] in such a way that he [...] tries to show that pure concepts of understanding as categories function only on the basis of a procedure [...] according to which understanding obtains a pure image for its concepts in pure time” (Heidegger, 1977, 430). Violent words, perhaps? No doubt, but their destructive tenor is utterly indispensable to Heidegger’s own attempt to demonstrate “what phenomenology is all about [...] in the course of the interpretation itself” of imagination as schematization (Heidegger, 1977, 6). Now compare Levinas, who, in the interview “Intention, Event, and the Other,” is ready to interpret the ultimate meaning not only

⁵ This is doubtless an argument that Levinas himself was more than ready to concede. See note 4 above.

of phenomenology but also of the Kantian schematism as “the search for the concrete figure of a concept” (Levinas, 2001, 150):

To me, all of phenomenology, the final meaning of phenomenology, appears as the search for the concrete figure of a concept, of a determination, of a thought. “Figure” in the scholastic sense—one must specify the figure of one’s thinking. Figure is the concrete, something concrete in which one can think a thing. [...] We are dealing with abstract things and concepts, and phenomenology—“to the things themselves”—therefore requires some kind of staging, a *mise-en-scène*. As I like to say, phenomenology is the search for a *mise-en-scène*. (Levinas, 2001, 150–151)

And later:

The chapter on the schematism is exceedingly important with Kant. And do you know why? Because the schematism chapter is the one in which synthesis can receive its *mise-en-scène*, in what is sensible, in *time*. The concept of “staging” fits this chapter. You may recall why Kant, after the deduction of the categories, must all at once return to the sensible. Only in the schema of time does such a thing become concrete. (Levinas, 2001, 152)⁶

⁶ It should be observed that the Kantian schematism, interpreted here phenomenologically as the “staging” in which the abstract synthesis of the categories becomes concrete in the sensible schema of time, therefore not only does not withdraw the problematic of sensibility from view but, rather, is that which is ultimately responsible for its rehabilitation in modern thought. Thus, in the opening lines to his 1955 essay “Jean Wahl and Feeling,” Levinas asserts that: “Sensibility is enjoying greater esteem in contemporary thought. It no longer appears as a stammering thought, condemned to error and illusion, nor even as a spring board for rational knowledge. Under the influence of [...] phenomenology, sensibility is seen to possess its own specific depth and wisdom. All intellectual construction receives the style and the very dimensions of its architecture from sensible experience—which it claims to transcend. [...] Certainly this is congenial to empiricism, but to a very new sort of empiricism. Sensibility does not simply register the facts; it sketches out something like the ‘vital statistics’ and metaphysical destiny of the being experienced. The senses make sense. The loftiest works of the mind bear their indelible trace. One might also use the Kantian term, transcendental aesthetics, as does Husserl. One might say that, for our contemporaries, the transcendental function of sensibility is to weave pure forms—other than those of space and time—from the tangled skein that is the very content of sensations. The way the forms of space and time mark the phenomenal object in Kantianism closely resembles the way a phenomenology of pre-predicative experience would render the scientific universe intelligible. The rehabilitation of sensibility I just mentioned goes back ultimately to Kant. Pure sensibility — that was his discovery” (Levinas, 1996, 110–111). In a footnote to his 1972 essay “Paul Celan: From Being to the Other,” Levinas clarifies further what such a phenomenological rehabilitation of sensibility involves and relates it explicitly to the Kantian schematism: “Alongside the mathematization of facts, by tracing them upward to the level of form, there is the *schematization* (in the Kantian sense) of intelligibles by the descent into sensibility. Formal, pure concepts, when put to the test in the concrete, the impure, resonate (or reason) differently, and take on new meanings. The exposure of the categories of the understanding to time certainly limited the rights of reason, but it also uncovered a physics at the basis of mathematical logic. The abstract idea of substance became the principle of the constancy of mass, and the

Despite these affinities, there is of course an aspect to the Kantian schematism—as the immediate return to the concrete figure of a concept in the sensible schema of time⁷—that remains abstract and derived, since it is grounded in the concrete and primordial events of ecstatic-horizonal temporality. But my book never attempts to obfuscate this fact. Quite the opposite: my resounding argument is that the Kantian schematism is unveiled concretely as a derivative abstraction not just from the destructive perspective of Heidegger’s philosophy, but, far more importantly, from the destructive perspective of Rosenzweig’s philosophy as well. I expound this argument in the general introduction to the book, and again in the second section of the final chapter entitled “The Levinasian Explication of Rosenzweig”:

In Heideggerian terms, it is because the ecstatic temporality of the religious human being is “intrinsically open” toward the three “horizons” of time—past, present, and future—and due to the three primordial events—Creation, Revelation, and Redemption—that the time-forming relations of God, man and world can be unveiled concretely as the “horizonal schemas” of the biblical ecstases. And because these primordial events here frame the destructive perspective through which to work out the time-forming relations of God, man and world as a schematization of the Kantian ideas, it follows that there is an ideal notion of the schematism which is itself grounded in the ecstatic-horizonal temporality of the religious human being. It therefore becomes necessary to admit that Rosenzweig’s destruction of the Kantian schematism unveils it in a manner that exceeds that of Heidegger’s own destruction, since he unveils it as an order of time according to a schema of ideas, and thus no longer as an order of time according to a schema of categories. Consequently, he moves beyond the previous task of destroying the categorial schemas of time in order to carry out the even greater task of destroying the ideal schemas of time. (Frangskou, 2017, 151)

This argument is the result of a certain hypothesis, which is to say, of the supposition that if Levinas unfolds in Rosenzweig’s philosophy a more radical destruction of the Kantian schematism than the one contained in Heidegger’s philosophy, because it exceeds the task of destroying the schematism of the categories by effectively destroy-

empty concept of community became the principle of reciprocal interaction.—[...] Is not Husserl’s phenomenology a way of schematizing the real within the unsuspected horizons of sensible subjectivity? Just as formal logic is to be referred back to the concretization of subjectivity, so the world of perception and history, in its objectivity, is accused of abstraction, if not of formalism—and becomes the vital lead to the discovery of horizons of meaning, within which it will begin to signify with true signification” (Levinas, 1996, 175–176).

⁷ Whether such a schematism is based on the productive imagination’s figurative synthesis of the categories of the understanding (according to its Heideggerian interpretation) or on the regulative maximization of that synthesis by the ideas of pure reason (according to my own Levinasian reinterpretation of it) matters little here. I will return to this issue of reinterpreting the productive imagination’s figurative (time-related) synthesis below.

ing the schematism of the ideas, then we should start by utilizing his explication of Rosenzweig so as to discover just how destructive the search for the concrete figure of a concept can become within his own philosophy. I must therefore object to Yampolskaya's suggestion that my book has forgotten or, at the very least, shaded the Rosenzweigian requirement of concreteness that Levinas first "inherited from Heidegger" (Yampolskaya, 2018, 582). Quite the opposite: I never cease to acknowledge Levinas' claim that in Rosenzweig's thought, the abstract aspects of the Kantian schematism are not rendered fully intelligible except in the concrete events of ecstatic-horizonal temporality. This is shown in Levinas' 1965 essay on Rosenzweig—"Franz Rosenzweig: A Modern Jewish Thinker"—where he introduced each of the time-forming syntheses of God, man and world as a concrete and primordial event of temporal ecstasis (Levinas, 1987, 67–89)⁸. And it becomes even more explicit in his 1982 essay "The Philosophy of Franz Rosenzweig" where these time-forming syntheses or relations are described as being unveiled concretely in the biblical ecstases of temporality as a schematization of the Kantian ideas, and thus, as an ideal notion of the Kantian schematism (Levinas, 2007, 135–144).

The ethical significance of this ideal notion of the Kantian schematism in the form of the regulative ideas can be gleaned from a footnote to Levinas' 1974 essay "From Consciousness to Wakefulness." Although the note belongs to what is conventionally understood as Levinas' criticism of the Kantian notion of God as a regulative idea, such an understanding is nevertheless complicated by the fact that it also effects a transformation of that notion into the very terms of Levinas' own thought:

"As if"—not the uncertainty or simple verisimilitude of the philosophies of the "*als ob*." The latter, despite their empirical prudence, remain attached to the truth-result, to the ideal identity of the objective, and, more generally, to the univocity of presence and of being. We hear in the "as if" the equivocation or the enigma of the nonphenomenon, the nonrepresentable: [...] Nonsynchronizable diachrony, enigmatic significance and, only thus, signifying beyond being or God. (Levinas, 1982, 51)

What is remarkable here—and this cannot be emphasized enough—is Levinas' attempt to hear within the Kantian notion of God as a regulative idea the equivocation or enigma of diachrony. With these terms, which are introduced into the regulative idea of God so as to effectively transform its significance, Levinas offers us a strong indication that his reading of the *First Critique* is already on the way out of ontology

⁸ I only make passing reference to the 1965 essay in the final chapter of my book, but have discussed it at length in a previously published article entitled "Levinas, Rosenzweig and the Deformalization of Time: Toward an Ethical Destruction of the Schematism" (Frangeskou, 2015, 263–277).

by virtue of an ethical reading of the regulative idea of God in which its initial attachment to the presence of being will have been undone. But is Levinas really proffering this? According to a conventional understanding of the note, clearly not: as the Kantian notion of the “*als ob*” par excellence, the regulative idea of God would remain attached to the presence of being, and thus would attest to Kant’s own failure to hear in the “as if” the enigma of the nonsynchronizable diachrony that signifies the beyond being of God. But perhaps there is another, more subtle way to understand the criticism that Levinas is making here. For he only criticizes the “as if” of the regulative idea of God in order to better reveal the transformation of its ontological significance as “*als ob*” into the ethical “as if” of the enigma of diachrony, thereby attesting to an enigmatic significance that marks their inextricable connection. Yampolskaya, on the other hand, wants to insist on a pure and absolute separation, dividing Levinas as ethical philosopher of the beyond being of God from the ontological Kant, whose own philosophy of the “*as if*” in the form of the regulative idea of God is nothing more than “the Kantian attempt to ascribe being to God,” and which “for Levinas [...] is intolerable” (Yampolskaya, 2018, 584). But surely, given what I have just said, this is too divisive. For among Levinas’ various characterizations of diachrony was that it rendered “the overdetermination of the ontological categories [...] visible, which transforms them into ethical terms” (Levinas, 1978, 181). The interpretive task of my book was to shed light on Levinas’ relationship to Kant by exploring how the overdetermination, and indeed, transformation of the ontological categories of the Kantian schematism by the regulative ideas of pure reason already anticipates the ethical terms that Levinas introduced in his thought of diachrony. Yampolskaya’s objection to this interpretation is certainly mindful of the diachronous “form of rationality that underlies the Levinasian philosophy” (Yampolskaya, 2018, 584). But then I am bewildered as to how she can accept Levinas’ intolerance toward the regulative idea of God as attachment to the presence of being, whilst at the same time choosing to ignore his transformative reading of the regulative idea of God as signifying the beyond being of God in diachrony. I certainly do not deny that I am—to use her somewhat caustic expression—“surprisingly deaf” to Levinas’ criticism of the regulative idea of God in my book (Yampolskaya, 2018, 584)⁹. But she is perhaps surprised by her own conven-

⁹ Thus, to take the most obvious example, on completing his account of the regulative use of the ideas in the Kant lecture of 1976—an account which is central to the argument of my book—Levinas contends that: “Despite everything [which is to say, despite this ‘proper use to which we can put these ideas [...], where they do not have the function of determining being—where they *must not* end up at being—but where they direct and orient the work of the understanding’], there is a return to onto-theo-logy in Kantian thought, in the way in which it determines the idea of God. On the basis of experience, God is posited as the totality of reality (*omnitudo realitatis*). Kant calls

tional understanding of its significance for Levinas, which is more antagonistic than is necessary and thus refuses to hear what Levinas himself has allowed us to hear in his reading of the Kantian “*as if*,” namely, the ethical transformation of the ontological categories of the Kantian schematism carried out by the regulative ideas of pure reason.

Despite all this, however, I think Yampolskaya is entirely correct to highlight the adherence of Levinas’ “philosophy of ambiguity” to the Kantian “antinomies,” which he himself acknowledged on more than one occasion (Yampolskaya, 2018, 585). But I would strongly suggest resituating this matter on the terrain of—once again—the regulative ideas of pure reason. Of special significance here is the regulative principle which, for Kant, marks the capacity of the ideas of pure reason to prescribe a rule of infinite regression to the synthesis of time as performed by the imagination (A 509/B 537–A 510/B 538). In the context of my book, this amounts to the question of whether it is possible to surpass Heidegger’s interpretation of imaginative time-related synthesis as the ground of the categories of the understanding (Heidegger, 1977, 282–285). To Heidegger’s ontological interpretation of imaginative time-related synthesis, which grounds the categories of the understanding in the deductions of the Transcendental Analytic, one could respond that there is also a regressive time-related synthesis of imagination which grounds the ideas of pure reason in the antinomies of the Transcendental Dialectic—in short, to put it in Levinas’ terms, that “the dialectical alternations of reasoning” in the Kantian antinomies are grounded in a regressive synthesis of imagination which relates to “time itself, but as an incessant dia-chrony” (Levinas, 1982, 184–224). Departing from the Heideggerian view of imaginative time-related synthesis by following this suggestion of Levinas’ later thought, it thus becomes possible to interpret the regressive time-related synthesis of imagination which grounds the alternation of the ideas of pure reason in the ethical terms of diachrony. As Levinas himself intimates, “This is an alternation [which] does not attest to a simple flaw

this [...] reality a *transcendental ideal*. [...] It is *in concreto* and *in individuo*. It is, as the totality of what is, the supreme form of concreteness and individuality. It is not a thing (on the contrary, all things suppose it), and yet it is ‘something’ that is. Kant identifies it with God. This is fully in line with Western thought, where the totality of being is thought of as a being, even if Kant here distinguishes his claim, asserting that one cannot prove the existence of this concrete supreme entity, of this individual [...]. One cannot therefore demonstrate speculatively (by theoretical thought) the being of the transcendental ideal, but Kant keeps the idea that the ultimate meaning of a notion is in its being; he does not grant to the thinkable any other norm than that of being” (Levinas, 1993, 178–179). But, again, such statements of intolerance toward the regulative use of the idea of God by Levinas precisely conceal from us the potential of his own thought—as evidenced by the remarkable footnote of 1974—to transform the ontological significance of that use into ethical terms as the ideal capacity to direct and orient the schematizing work of the understanding.

in synthesis, but would define time itself [...] in its enigmatic diachrony” (Levinas, 1982, 207). It is precisely on the grounds of this enigmatic and diachronous alternation within the synthesis of time itself—an alternation which, according to Levinas, “would signify the ambiguity of an incessant adjournment or [...] the approach of an infinite God” (Levinas, 1982, 207)—that his characterization of the Kantian antinomies as a philosophy of ambiguity demands to be assessed, along with the legitimacy of Yampolskaya’s own claim that my “‘ethical’ reading of the *First Critique* should have taken seriously this other, ‘hesitant’ and ‘ambiguous,’ form of rationality ‘on the other side of knowledge’ ” (Yampolskaya, 2018, 585).

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